

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 27, 2005

CLEAN WATER BILL COAUTHORED BY AUSTIN HEADS TO GOVERNOR

INDIANAPOLIS -- House Bill 1431, legislation co-authored by State Rep. Terri Austin (D-Anderson) that will provide funding for the Clean Water Indiana Fund from the cigarette tax fund, is available for final approval by the governor.

One-sixth of the money from the tax will be contributed to the Clean Water Indiana Fund, which will amount to approximately \$3.7 million.

Indiana will also be eligible to obtain federal matching funds through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) of up to \$8 for every \$1 spent by the state. Currently, Indiana is the only state that does not receive CREP matching funds.

"Having the opportunity to work with members of my Soil and Water Conservation District Board over the past two years has been very educational," Austin said. "Indiana's participation in the CREP program will provide much-needed funds, some of which I hope will be targeted toward Madison County's needs."

The fund is intended to protect and enhance Indiana's lakes, rivers and ground water by preventing polluted storm water run-off from entering water systems. Some of the projects that have been funded include installing sediment and water control structures, pasture renovations, livestock exclusion fencing, seeding critical areas and supplying farmers and other landowners with equipment and technical assistance to protect the water sources on their property.

"Indiana is ranked 48th in the country on environmental indicators like air quality, energy consumption and state spending on the environment," said Austin. "It is time that the state starts working to change this. The abundance of wildlife and the beauty of Indiana is one of the state's biggest attractions and we need to make sure we preserve this."